

# Beyond Income Generation: Conceptualising Women Entrepreneurship as a Systemic Development Strategy in India

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**Abstract---** *Vision Viksit Bharat @ 2047 is a nation-building activity consisting of four pillars: Garib, Yuva, Annadata, and Nari. Nari, or women in India, is not only a beneficiary of growth but also an agent of economic, social, and institutional transformation. This study views the transition of women entrepreneurs from income generation lenses to a holistic development paradigm shift led by women. The women-led enterprises intersect with social change, community resilience, and intergenerational wellbeing. Drawing upon recent empirical studies, policy frameworks, and development theory, the paper develops a multidimensional conceptualisation of women entrepreneurship encompassing household-embedded enterprises, community-driven development, digital inclusion, and institutional participation. This article brings out that women entrepreneurs in rural India are functioning as economic actors, social innovators, and custodians of local development. This study offers a future-facing framework by synthesising recent literature that situates women entrepreneurs as an important factor in India's transition into a developed economy by 2047.*

**Keywords---** *Women Entrepreneurship, Women-led Development, Viksit Bharat 2047, Community-driven Development, Inclusive Growth, MSMEs*

## I. INTRODUCTION

INDIA aspires to become a developed economy by 2047, the centenary of its independence, by structured policy actions. Viksit Bharat focuses not only on economic expansion but also on social inclusion, institutional development, and sustainable livelihoods. Within this framework, women's participation is seeing a transition from welfare-oriented discourse to more assertive women-led development.

Despite guarantees on equality, women in India are facing constraints of limited access to capital, digital exclusion, burdens due to unpaid care, and underrepresentation in markets and government [10], [5]. In recent years, women-based businesses are witnessing a structural shift. Women-led MSMEs have doubled. Women's workforce participation is increasing, along with an increase in the women's share of new entrepreneurs in the formal and semi-formal economy.

This study brings out that women entrepreneurship is in a strategic development, contributing to inclusive growth, reducing inequality, and improving community resilience. This study reframes women entrepreneurship within the broader framework of VVB @ 2047, beyond individual success and developmental understanding.

### *Women Entrepreneurship in the Viksit Bharat Framework*

VVB@2047 framework includes women development alongside with poverty alleviation, youth development and suitability as the core Pillars of national development and progress. Unlike earlier development models that focused on women as recipients of welfare schemes, the current approach emphasises agency, productivity, and leadership [2].

Women entrepreneurs contribute to

- Women employment generation [1]
- Economic diversification in rural and semi urban areas [12]
- Inclusive social innovation, addressing education, health, nutrition and climate adaptation [4]

Enterprises led by women mostly merger from lived realities, household needs, care giving and community gaps which make them aligned with inclusive and sustainable development goals [17]

## II. CONCEPTUALISING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL LENS

### *Household-Embedded Entrepreneurship*

Women enterprises in India are embedded with household ecosystems. They are in unison with family priorities like food safety, children education, health care and asset generation [3]. This interdependence aids in enhancing business continuity even during economic shocks and improves women's bargaining power within their household [11], [12].

### *Community-Driven and Collective Models*

Community driven development was made possible through Self-help groups, women producer companies and women led cooperatives. These models provided women in making decentralised decisions, risk pooling and gives equal access to

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finance and markets [21]. Women led community driven development are generating stronger social capital and equitable development outcomes [9].

#### *Digital and Technological Inclusion*

Digital platforms enable women entrepreneurs in providing market access, payments and skill acquisition [13]. However, there is a gendered digital divide that limits its scalability and innovation [15]. It is essential to integrate digital literacy with enterprise support in order to sustain women led growth.

#### *Life-Course and Experience-Based Entrepreneurship*

Female entrepreneurs move through several stages of life. Gradual growth, long term involvement and learning from failures are the important aspects of women enterprises' sustainability [18]. This looks out for a specific framework which incorporates the circumstances and contrasts with the conventional methods of measuring entrepreneurial performance.

#### *Women Entrepreneurship as an Engine of Inclusive Growth*

Women entrepreneurship is recognized as a driver for inclusive growth and not as a welfare-oriented activity. Their contribution extends beyond GDP expansion to provide equitable access to opportunities, income security, social mobility and institutional participation. Women led enterprises align with the above objectives as they simultaneously generate income, distribute resources within household and improve community level resilience [10], [19]

Studies have shown that women entrepreneurs have continuously reinvested a higher proportion of their earnings in food safety, nutrition, education, healthcare and housing which makes them provide strong intergenerational development effects [14], [4]. This makes women's enterprise activities feasible especially in the regions characterised by multidimensional poverty and highly informal employment. In India, women led MSMEs have a huge impact on local employment generation, particularly for other women, which reduces the dependency ratio and stabilizes household livelihoods [12].

In a macroeconomic perspective, bringing down the gender gaps in entrepreneurship and labour force participation can accelerate the national growth sustainably. According to the [8] estimates, gender parity in economic participation can raise India's GDP by 27%. India is witnessing rising female work participation with changing consumption demand and local market depth [20]. Women entrepreneurs not only contribute to equity but also to the aggregated economic efficiency.

Women led enterprises have a very limited public support and provisioning as they emerge in highly volatile and high failure sectors like food processing, health care, education, agriculture and green enterprises [17]. These enterprises influence inclusive growth by creating social value and bridge the gap between state capacity and community needs.

#### *Challenges and Structural Constraints*

Women entrepreneurship in India still faces structural and institutional barriers which are not from the individual level but are rooted within the social norms, market and policy design

[5]. Burden of unpaid care work in the family is one of the common challenges faced by women, this caregiving limits their time, brings down mobility and influences their risk-taking capacity. It is estimated that average Indian women spend nearly three times more time in domestic caregiving work than men. This constrains their entrepreneurship ability and business continuity [17]. This so-called time poverty results in lower productivity, limited market engagement and informality in business.

Another crucial bottleneck in women entrepreneurship is formal access to finance. Even though women are the significant beneficiaries of microcredit, they still face difficulties in accessing formal growth-related credit due to lack of collateral, weak asset ownership and gender biases [6], [21]. This makes women enterprises trapped in low investment and low return cycles.

Digitalization brings new challenges to women led business, as it provides new opportunities like financial inclusion and easy access to markets. However, gender divides like limited device ownership, low digital literacy and social restrictions bring down the usage of technology among women entrepreneurs [15], [13].

Women entrepreneurs are underrepresented in the business associations like MSME councils, cooperatives and policy forums which limit their influence over the regulatory support which shapes their entrepreneurial environment [16]. Women entrepreneurs will be a 'policy subject' rather than a 'policy maker' without their institutional presence.

Issues like safety, mobility and social legitimacy restrict women entrepreneurs' participation in markets. Personal safety concerns, gender based harassment, transportation and family reputational risk influence women's willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activity. [7], UN Women, 2024).

#### *Policy Implications for Viksit Bharat @ 2047*

Policy approaches under Vision Viksit Bharat @ 2047 have to go beyond fragmented schemes towards integrated and system level interventions to make women entrepreneurship function as a transformative engine for inclusive growth.

First, there is a need to transition from credit-centric support to ecosystem-based policy design. Access to finance must be complemented by childcare infrastructure, market linkages, digital skilling, and legal literacy. It is evident from the literature sources that bundling financial interventions will improve the survival and growth rates of women led enterprises [14], [21].

Secondly, investments in the care economy should be treated as economic infrastructure and not as social expenditure. Developing community crèches for kids, workplace child care and professionalised care service systems for family members can release women's time for productive engagement and results in improving the sustainability of the enterprise [7]. These types of investments will yield high economic multipliers which is essential for long term labour force retention.

Thirdly, it is suggested to strengthen the decentralised and community driven development models. Women entrepreneurs should be included in the local planning processes through

SHGs and panchayat level enterprise councils which will improve their accountability, contextual relevance and social ownership of development outcomes [9].

Digital inclusions must include a gender first design, which integrates digital literacy, affordable access and platform-based market integration for women entrepreneurs.

Finally, there should be representation of women entrepreneurs across economic decision-making bodies to ensure institutional representation of women in governance reforms. To improve the enterprise ecosystems, quotas, incentives and leadership initiatives can be provided which will shift women from margins of enterprise to positions of influence, aligning with vision of VVN@2047 women led development.

### III. CONCLUSION

Women entrepreneurship is one of India's most powerful but under leveraged development ways. India's vision towards Viksit Bharat @2047 sees the transition from development for women to development by women which is indispensable. Women entrepreneurs are the source of economic growth in social realities, they align markets with community needs and their development is inclusive, resilient and sustainable. Women entrepreneurship is a systemic development strategy rather than an economic activity, centered to India's vision of becoming truly developed nations.

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